Business Plan

2017–2018

Department of
Natural Resources

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to share with you the 2017-18 Business Plan for the Department of Natural Resources. This plan demonstrates our commitment to support government priorities by creating conditions for natural resource businesses to grow sustainably and for Nova Scotians to benefit from the province's natural resources.

Over the past year, we celebrated many accomplishments. The work we have planned for 2017-18 will be as equally challenging and rewarding.

We will complete the development of new regulations under the Mineral Resources Act and implement required regulatory changes to NovaRoc, our online Mineral and Petroleum Rights Registry. The department will continue to implement a strategy to proactively support Nova Scotia's mining industry, by promoting investment opportunities at mining conferences, and by releasing geoscience data of the Cobequid Highlands to generate new exploration interest in northern Nova Scotia.

Our attention to forestry will include continued support for innovation in the forest sector through strategic investments in the Innovation Hub, working with the Mi'kmaq to complete an agreement for a Mi'kmaq Forestry Initiative, and negotiating and finalizing Forest Utilization Licence Agreements across the province's Crown lands.

We look forward to publishing resource materials that will be utilized by professionals and nonprofessionals in various disciplines, including a Field Guide to Forest Biodiversity Stewardship, the State of the Forest Report, and modules of the State of Biodiversity Report, as well as, an updated policy for forest management on Crown land.

Our Crown lands are a vital resource and we will work to identify their alternative use by working with industry associations, engaging stakeholders, and by using GIS mapping tools to unlock the maximum value of Crown lands. We will continue to assist residents of East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook through the land titles clarification process, in collaboration with four other government bodies, including African Nova Scotian Affairs, as well as Halifax Regional Municipality, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and Nova Scotia Legal Aid.

We will review processes related to routine Crown land transactions, ensuring process improvements focus on client service, as well as facilitating risk assessment by our staff.

We are working with the Department of Environment to move towards 13 per cent protected land across the province, and will continue this work while ensuring there are no negative recreational or economic effects.

In 2017-18 camping park seasons, will be expanded in Blomidon, Ellenwood Lake and Mira River Provincial camping parks, making our parks available for an additional 5 weeks.

We will also support the development of an electronic licensing system that enhances wildlife harvest management and client service, with Service Nova Scotia and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture.

We would like to thank the staff of the Department of Natural Resources for their hard work and commitment to delivering important programs and services to Nova Scotians. We are proud of the work we have accomplished in 2016-17 and look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Original signed by

Honourable Lloyd P. Hines
Minister, Natural Resources

Original signed by

Julie Towers
Deputy Minister, Natural Resources

Department Mandate and Core Functions

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has broad responsibilities relative to the development, management, conservation and protection of forest, mineral, parks and wildlife resources and the administration of the province's Crown lands.

In 2017-18, DNR will focus on:

- a long-term plan to sustainably transform Nova Scotia's forestry industry and maximize the use of high-value resources,
- an enhanced regulatory framework for mineral exploration in the province,
- comprehensive Crown land-use planning informed by public and First Nations' consultation, and,
- working with Department of Environment to move towards 13 per cent protected land across the province, while ensuring there are no negative recreational or economic effects.

Core functions and services are offered and delivered through five branches: Land Services, Geoscience and Mines, Regional Services, Renewable Resources and Policy, Planning and Support Services.

Outcome, Goals and Priority Activities

In 2017-18 the Department will carry out a number of initiatives, programs and services to advance our mandate and achieve core functions. Many of these activities will involve collaborations across government, work with other jurisdictions and partnerships with external organizations.

Outcome: As the economic driver for forestry, mining, and Crown lands utilization, DNR creates conditions for natural resource businesses to grow sustainably and Nova Scotians to benefit from the province's natural resources.	
Goals	1. Support the sustainable development of the province's natural resources in order to attract investment, create high-value jobs, and grow the economy. 2. Manage the province's natural resources to achieve a sustainable balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits. 3. Increase and share knowledge about natural resources to help governments and interested groups make informed decisions and take responsible action. 4. Provide clear and effective laws and policies to ensure that natural resources are economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

Goal 1: Support the sustainable development of the province's natural resources in order to attract investment, create high-value jobs, and grow the economy.

- Work with Atlantic provinces to improve innovation conditions for a robust bio-products sector across the region, including building partnerships and cooperative arrangements in 2017-18
- Provide financial and technical support to the Innovation Hub to explore innovative uses of products and new market opportunities, in partnership with Innovacorp, ACOA, and Emera
- Ongoing implementation of the Minerals Promotion Strategy to proactively support Nova Scotia's mining industry, involving promotion of investment opportunities at mining conferences including China Mining and release Cobequid Highlands geoscience-data package to generate new exploration interest in northern Nova Scotia
- Finalize an agreement for a Mi'kmaq Forestry Initiative
- Identify alternative uses for Crown lands by working with industry associations, engaging stakeholders, and using GIS mapping tools to unlock the maximum value of Crown lands
- Support Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to replace the effluent treatment plant in Boat Harbour

- Establish an advisory committee with representation from the department, Perennia and local community and business stakeholders to support identification of additional opportunities for Strathlorne Nursery site.

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Innovation projects in NR Sectors	Total projected investments in new innovation projects

Goal 2: Manage the province's natural resources to achieve a sustainable balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits.

- Develop partnerships and gather stakeholder input to expand landscape level planning beyond the Eastern region of the province (pilot project with Port Hawkesbury Paper in 2016-17)
- Negotiate and finalize longer term Forest Utilization Licence Agreements and other agreements across the province's Crown lands
- Work with Department of Environment to move towards 13 per cent protected land across the province, while ensuring there are no negative recreational or economic effects
- Support the development of an electronic licensing system that enhances wildlife harvest management and client service, with Service Nova Scotia/Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Continue to assist residents of East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook through the land titles clarification process, in collaboration with four government departments including African Nova Scotian Affairs, Halifax Regional Municipality, the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and Nova Scotia Legal Aid
- Continue to monitor and implement mineral management recommendations in response to the May 2014 Report of the Auditor General on mineral management
- Continue responding to the November 2015 Report of the Auditor General on forest management and protection, including implementing an adaptive forest operations monitoring program on Crown land
- Continued implementation of the work plan to respond to the June 2016 Report of the Auditor General on management of conservation and recovery of species at risk

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Crown land management, agreements and licenses enable long-term sustainable area-based management of forest ecosystems	Percentage increase in Crown forest land managed under long term FULAs implementing forest management plans using ecosystem-based forest management targets
Landscape level planning uses an ecosystem approach that considers a broad scope of values in forest management decision-making to support a sustainable forest sector	Completed ecosystem-based landscape scale plans
Efficient Land Services	Percentage increase in number of properties in East Preston, North Preston and Cherry Brook for which the land title has been clarified
Compliance with Auditor General recommendations related to natural resource sector management	Mineral management recommendations compliance is increased from 40% (Winter 2017) to 90% Higher compliance rates to Crown land forest operations requirements in Level Three audits Number of species at risk recovery plans created or reviewed and updated

Goal 3: Increase and share knowledge about natural resources to help governments and interested groups make informed decisions and take responsible action

- Continue to work with Nova Scotia Trails Federation and TransCanada Trail (TCT) and Communities Culture and Heritage to support completion of the Trail by 2017
- Work with the Department of Internal Services on a 3-5 year plan to expand LiDAR acquisition collection across the province, supporting planning and response to management of flood and pollution control, as well as planning and management of natural resources
- Identify and implement Integrated Resource Management process improvement opportunities

- Review and renewal of the department's over 135 outreach and education programs to better align with department priorities, improve management, and increase delivery efficiency
- Identify ways to standardize data collection processes for more efficient, effective and consistent knowledge sharing and decision-making across the department
- Work with Intergovernmental Affairs to gather information and support industry on emerging trade issues, including those related to softwood lumber and SC Paper CVD issues
- Explore collaborations with Nova Scotia Environment and communities on establishing a prototype water-well monitoring network in selected regions of Nova Scotia
- Monitor spruce budworm levels in Nova Scotia and continue establishing committees/working groups to proactively manage risks, as per the Spruce Budworm Management Framework – focus on building communications capacity and readiness

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Province-wide LiDAR data collection	Percentage change in hectares of LiDAR data acquired
Project portfolio management is used for design and implementation of DNR education and outreach.	Increased consistency in the delivery of DNR education and outreach projects (programs) aligned with DNR priorities

Goal 4: Provide clear and effective laws and policies to ensure that natural resources is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable.

- Complete development of new regulations under the Mineral Resources Act and implement required regulatory changes to the Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Rights (i.e. NovaRoc)
- Continue resource departments' collaboration on public participation activities

Performance Measures	
Indicator	Measure
Effective public participation	Percentage increase in the number of public participation sessions that demonstrate high evaluation scores

Departmental Expenses Summary

Natural Resources Expenses Summary
($ thousands)

Programs and Services	2016-2017 Estimate	2016-2017 Forecast	2017-2018 Estimate
Senior Management	1,076	1,048	864
Renewable Resources	24,687	24,241	24,520
Geoscience and Mines	4,394	4,320	4,341
Regional Services	37,006	40,289	38,809
Policy, Planning & Support Services	4,980	5,171	4,464
Land Services	4,344	4,218	4,180
Total - Departmental Expenses	**76,487**	**79,287**	**77,178**
Ordinary Recoveries	630	1,017	881
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	**631.0**	**605.1**	**630.0**

Notes:

Regional Services: Additional costs of $3.5M approved for fire suppression, offset by reductions in other areas totalling $700K (2016-17 Forecast).
Ordinary Revenues: See Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
TCA Purchase Requirements: See Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1